

Cornelius Cole, California Centenarian.

SCIENTIFIC tallbrows who love to delve into the possibilities of longevity take great pleasure in assuring us that within the next generation or so, everyone of us will be up and doing at the age of 100 years.

One glimpse at Cornelius Cole, former United States Senator from California, and the argument seems to be in favor of the scientific tallbrows hereinbefore referred to.

Cornelius Cole celebrated his one hundredth birthday on the seventeenth of September.

To hear him hark back over a centenarian lifetime is akin to reading history of another day and age.

Consider: Cornelius Cole was 24 years old two years before gold was discovered in California.

Here is a man who went through the rough and ready days of '49, a man who was a close friend of Abraham Lincoln, a man who served in both houses of Congress, and a man who had an interesting part to play in the purchase of Alaska.

He scarcely seems more than 75, this sun-tanned, unwrinkled, keen-minded centenarian.

Standing out in his memory more than anything else are his recollections of Abraham Lincoln.

It takes Cornelius Cole, close friend of Lincoln, to explode two popular fallacies which hover about the memory of the martyred president:

1—Abraham Lincoln was not a crude, unpolished man.

2—Abraham Lincoln did not write out the famous Gettysburg speech.

But let Cornelius Cole tell it:

"If I have never said anything worth while, I would like the Americans of to-day to know that Abraham Lincoln was not the crude, coarse man of popular conception. On the con-

trary, while he was of huge frame, Lincoln was a polished gentleman."

Such is the opinion of a man who sat on the same platform from which Lincoln delivered his immortal Gettysburg speech, and saw him five hours before the assassin, Booth, shot him.

"And, too, don't you ever believe that Lincoln wrote out his Gettysburg address. Why, he didn't even know he was to be called on for a speech that day. Edward Everett was the orator of the day, and after he finished a two-hour speech, Lincoln was called upon. Take it from me, Lincoln spoke from his heart, and he didn't read his speech. I was there on the platform, and if he had read his speech, I certainly would have noticed it.

"Lincoln was a philosopher. I remember those days when we feared that his life was in danger. I remember speaking to him about it one day, and I urged him to exercise great care.

"'Cole,' he said to me, 'one man's life is as sweet to him as another's, and no man would take my life without losing his.' I always will believe that Lincoln was the greatest man of my time. We were contemporaries. Lincoln was only twelve years older than I."

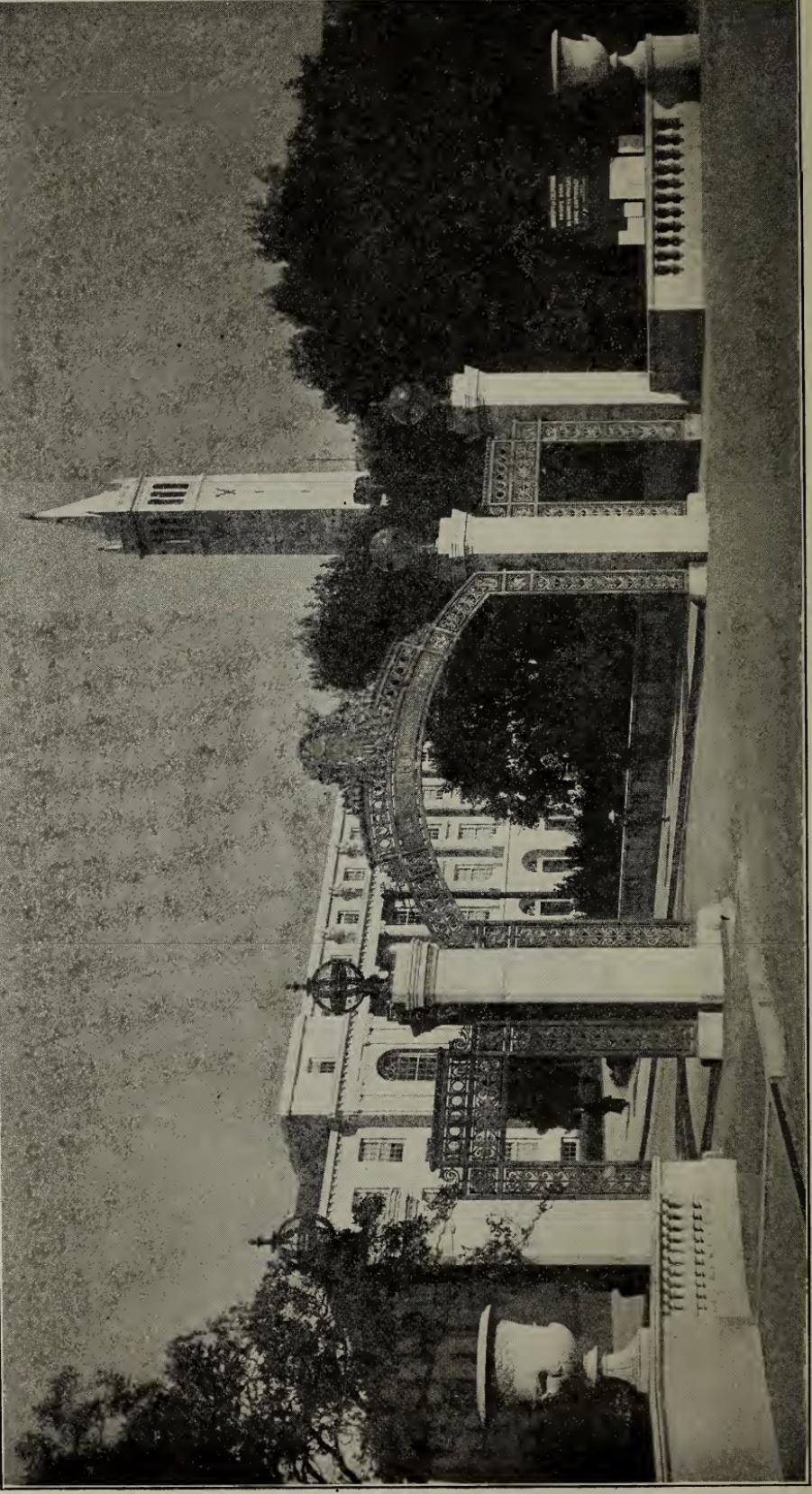
Politics are little different than in 1866 when Cole was elected to the United States Senate from California.

"With this difference," Cole explained: "In those days it seemed to me that men seeking high office had a higher regard for national ideals. To-day men spend tremendous sums of money to be elected to the Senate. When I ran for the Senate in '66, I didn't spend a cent."

Flappers have not been unnoticed by Lincoln's friend.

"A lot of people rave about the viciousness of the flapper," Cole said, "but, for the life of me, I can't see anything wrong

(Continued on page 15)



Sather Gate and Campanile, University of California, Berkeley, Cal.

about the clean expression of youngsters. These things always work out right in the end. In my young days, perhaps, the girls didn't talk as much or as frankly as they do to-day, but that is nothing to the discredit of either. I am strong for the youngsters of to-day. They are able-bodied and able-minded. Perhaps they go to extremes. Youth always did have that habit. But don't you worry—a generation hence these same flappers will be worrying about their own children."

A lot of Cornelius Cole's own friends don't know it, but he is the only living member of the United States Senate who sat in on the impeachment proceedings against President Johnson.

"I've outlived them all," Cole said, "and I don't know why. I've no rules for longevity except the exercise of common sense. I've always avoided extremes and excesses and I've always thanked God for a sense of humor. I believe it was a French physician who once said that when a man reaches the age of 40, he either is his own doctor or a fool—and I've always tried not to be a fool. I arise early, eat little, and I drink for my health when I can get it. I don't think much of prohibition. Seems too much like paternalism to me. I've always been in favor of abolishing the saloon, but I believe a man has a right to his wine and beer or ale."

Keeping out of debt is the main task of a nation or an individual, according to Cole.

"This nation and the people in it should get out of debt and stay out of debt," Cole said. "That is the biggest problem the United States must solve."

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